

SOME NOTES ON THE RED-CHESTED CUCKOO *CUCULUS SOLITARIUS* IN TANZANIA In view of the recent interest in the status and distribution of the Red-chested Cuckoo in East Africa, and in particular in Tanzania (Howell, Msuya & Stuart 1980, Britton 1980a), some notes on the species made between 1930 and 1962 may be worth recording, expanding a previously published short note (Fuggles-Couchman 1939).

I agree with Britton (1980a) that the Red-chested Cuckoo is a bird of wide altitudinal and regional distribution in Tanzania. In the old Eastern Province it occurred near sea level; in the Kilombero Valley (Rufiri, c. 300 m); generally throughout the intermediate levels of Morogoro and Kilosa Districts at 500-600 m, up to about 1900 m at Tchenzema, in the western Uluguru Mountains.

In the old Northern Province, of Moshi, Arusha, Masailand and Mbulu Districts, it ranged from the bottom of the Rift Valley at Engaruka (c. 1000 m), to over 2000 m on Mt Hanang and at Kilema and Rongai on Mt Kilimanjaro; in the Crater Highlands it was found at 1800 m at Kavenjiro. I have also one record from Bukoba District, Lake Province, at c. 1300 m on 15 May, when it was in full song.

The Red-chested Cuckoo was more catholic in its choice of habitat than is suggested by Mackworth-Præd & Grant (1957). While it frequented forest edges at higher altitudes, it was to be found widely distributed in miombo woodland, *Acacia pallens* - *Combretum* woodland and *Combretum* bushland at intermediate levels. It was also a bird of well-treed townships and cultivated areas such as at Morogoro and Kilosa and round Mts Meru and Kilimanjaro. But I never met it in the dry acacia scattered tree grasslands, and its appearance at Engaruka, in an arid area of the Rift Valley, could be accounted for by the existence of a narrow strip of evergreen trees and bush along the stream at the bottom of the Rift wall.

The song was heard over a long season in Morogoro, but the period could have been prolonged by the arrival of migrants. In 1937-38 the familiar call was first heard in Morogoro township on 27 October 1937, although it had been heard already at Tchenzema on 9 October. The last date it was heard at Morogoro was 26 June 1938. This date was later than that given in Fuggles-Couchman (1939), the earlier date having been the latest up to the time of submission of the MS. There was a high frequency of calls during November to early February, falling off into April and early May, but still usually heard on most days. Song then became increasingly noticeable towards the end of May. In the Northern Province first dates varied from 30 October at Monduli to 18 November on Mt Kilimanjaro, and the latest date recorded was 6 June on the western slopes of Kilimanjaro.

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